07/26/23 • COVID › NEWS

1,700+ Demand Retraction of Influential COVID-19 Origins Paper After Emails Reveal Authors Doubted Their Own Conclusions

Biosafety Now last week launched a petition — which so far has garnered more than 1,700 signatures — calling for Nature Medicine to retract the "Proximal Origins" paper, stating, "It is imperative that this clearly fraudulent and clearly damaging paper be removed from the scientific literature."

By Suzanne Burdick, Ph.D.

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More than 1,700 people have signed a petition calling for the retraction of the seminal scientific correspondence paper, "The proximal origin of SARS-CoV-2," that claimed COVID-19 was "not a laboratory construct or a purposefully manipulated virus."

The paper — sometimes referred to as the "Proximal Origins" paper or the "Nature Medicine paper" — was published March 17, 2020, in Nature Medicine journal.

It was used by former National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases Director Anthony Fauci, former National Institutes of Health Director Francis Collins, and other federal public health officials in 2020 and beyond to dismiss the possibility of a lab leak.

Biosafety Now — a nongovernmental organization that "advocates for reducing numbers of high-level biocontainment laboratories and for strengthening biosafety, biosecurity, and biorisk management for research on pathogens" —

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on July 19 launched the petition, stating, "It is imperative that this clearly fraudulent and clearly damaging paper be removed from the scientific literature."

Biosafety's leadership team includes 27 experts in biomedicine, mathematics, public health, public policy, public advocacy, law and social science.

Fraudulent paper 'played an influential role' in driving official narrative

Bryce Nickels, Ph.D., co-founder of Biosafety Now and professor of genetics at Rutgers University, said the petition seeks "to expose a clear case of scientific fraud and misconduct that has had a major impact on public opinion and policy."

Nickels told The Defender:

> "The removal of 'Proximal Origins' from the scientific literature is the first step in a long process needed to repair the damage this paper has caused to public trust in science."

According to the petition, "This paper played an influential role — indeed, the central role — in communicating the false narrative that science established that SARS-CoV-2 entered humans through natural spillover, and not through research-related spillover."

The petition continues:

> "Email messages and direct messages via the messaging program Slack among authors of the paper obtained under FOIA [Freedom of Information Act] or by the U.S. Congress and publicly released in full in July 2023 … show, incontrovertibly, that the authors did not believe the conclusions of the paper at the time the paper was written, at the time the paper was submitted for publication, and at the time the paper was published."

The recently-released internal communications show the paper "was, and is, the product of scientific fraud and scientific misconduct," the petition said.

Commenting on the petition, investigative journalist Paul Thacker said:

> "The thing that's really the most troubling, which is why it should be retracted … [is] the ghostwriting and the undue influence [of federal public health officials on the drafting of the paper], which we know from the emails by Francis Collins, by Anthony Fauci, and from Jeremy Farrar."

Thacker — who noted that within only a few days the petition had already garnered more than 1,300 signatures and set the hashtag #RetractProximalOrigins trending on Twitter — told The Defender:

> "These guys basically ordered up a piece of science — or some sort of publication — that they could then point to, which they all did afterwards, as definitive proof that this thing could not have come from the lab.
>
> "The whole thing was orchestrated for political purposes. It has nothing to do with science."

Little more than a 'political piece of propaganda'

Thacker is a former fellow at the Safra Center for Ethics at Harvard University whose investigative writing has appeared in The New York Times, The BMJ, the Journal of the American Medical Association and The Washington Post.

He explained that weeks prior to the paper's publication, Kristian Andersen, Ph.D. — one of the co-authors of the "Proximal Origins" paper — emailed Fauci and Collins a draft of the manuscript, thanking them for their "advice and leadership" on the paper.

Andersen also invited Fauci and Collins to comment and offer suggestions about the paper — but neither are mentioned in the acknowledgments section of the final version published by Nature Medicine. According to Thacker:

> "Both Collins and Fauci then promoted the Nature Medicine paper as

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evidence of 'independent science' pointing against a possible lab accident — Collins in a post for the NIH Director's blog that alleged the study left 'little room' for argument in favor of a lab accident, and Anthony Fauci in a White House press briefing.

"In both cases, neither Collins nor Fauci disclosed their involvement in orchestrating Andersen's study. This last March, Congress released further emails showing that Fauci helped to orchestrate the Nature Medicine paper."

Thacker pointed out that the paper — which "has been called everything from 'research paper' to 'analysis' to 'study'" — was "really just correspondence" that was later turned into a "political piece of propaganda that people could then reference, which they did."

Describing the recent about-face regarding the paper's importance, Thacker said:

"Now the editor-in-chief of Nature Medicine is saying, 'Oh, well, it was just a viewpoint ... like he's trying to dismiss what it was when they [federal public officials] used it for completely different purposes. They used it as some definitive piece of scientific research that put to rest any idea this thing could have come from a lab.

"Then we find out internally that none of them who wrote it believed that in the first place. ... Quite frankly, from the very beginning, none of the scientific evidence in any direction means anything about how this pandemic started. It's always been the internal documents and the money that have mattered more."

Thacker added, "This entire drama and discussion has nothing to do with science. It has everything to do with corruption and a coverup."

On July 25 Thacker tweeted:

Writers Curtis Schube and Gary Lawkowski in a July 24 op-ed for The Hill pointed out that when the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention responded to the FOIA request to release Fauci's "explosive" email showing his involvement with the Nature Medicine paper, the agency completely redacted the email.

Moreover, Thacker alleged that Andersen submitted false testimony at the July

11 hearing of the House Select Subcommittee on the Coronavirus Pandemic, which is investigating the origins of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Andersen's allegation that Fauci and Collins were provided the paper only after it had been "accepted" and was in "proof" is false, Thacker said. "Emails impeach this portion of Andersen's testimony," he added.

Thacker also pointed out that The Intercept last week published newly revealed documents showing Andersen and his co-author — Tulane virologist Robert Garry, Ph.D. — both lied to Congress during the House hearing. The alleged lies covered the fact that both had pending federal grants controlled by Fauci — money that could have been used to influence their positions on the lab-leak theory.

Robert F. Kennedy Jr.'s latest book, "The Wuhan Cover-up: How US Health Officials Conspired with the Chinese Military to Hide the Origins of COVID-19," is due out in September. The book is available now for preorder. Kennedy is the founder and chairman on leave from Children's Health Defense.

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Suzanne Burdick, Ph.D.

Suzanne Burdick, Ph.D., is a reporter and researcher for The Defender based in Fairfield, Iowa. She holds a Ph.D. in Communication Studies from the University of Texas at Austin (2021), and a master's degree in communication and leadership from Gonzaga University (2015). Her scholarship has been published in Health Communication. She has taught at various academic institutions in the United States and is fluent in Spanish.

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Drummer
21 days ago
Love it! Kudos to you for researching and writing this! (-:
4 0 Reply • Share ›

PonyBoy
19 days ago
The warriors for Truth will prevail.
2 0 Reply • Share ›

Izzat So
20 days ago

For starters, every single author, and peer reviewer, and publisher of the Nature paper should have ALL their professional titles stripped, ALL their grants recalled, and they should be permanently prohibited from any connection whatsoever to medicine, health care, and research. That's for starters. Then the same authors should be coated with gravy and thrown into a pen with starving wolves. What happens after that is just like what their lies did to America. I have zero sympathy for these moral and ethical (not to mention, legal) criminals. I demand serious and IMMEDIATE prosecution, keeping in mind the international restrictions on bio-weapon research and the attendant severe punishments.

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GarySummers ↗ Izzat So
19 days ago

1.) **"mRNA Covid jabs have caused *silent heart damage to tens of millions of people*, a shocking new study suggests"**
Moderna's Covid booster caused 1 in 35 people to have heart injuries detectable with blood tests, Swiss doctors report. Will the Centers for Disease Control or American researchers take note?

A dose of Moderna's Covid jab injured the hearts of about 3 percent of people who received it, Swiss researchers have found.
https://alexberenson.substa...

2.) "Statistician calls for 'Fauci's covid origins paper' to be "'RETRACTED'" after unearthed chat message to scientists" "engaged in gross misconduct"
https://www.naturalnews.com...

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Observing ↗ Izzat So
18 days ago

Oh, well demands are like dreams.

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Jerry Shelton
20 days ago

it should be withdrawn.....they know what happened....they got payed to shut up

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motorcyclerider
20 days ago

"The whole thing was orchestrated for political purposes. It has nothing to do with science."

An excellent observation. True for just about all 'democrat' science...such as CO2 and 'global warming'.

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Observing
18 days ago

It was as valid as the Lancet report that was written by a porn queen and her film producer husband that was later quietly retracted. The government used that for it's proof of covid origins also.

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Dr. Olivier Godichet
20 days ago

One point the outbreak, another the reaching of compartment of diffusion, another the diffusion, another the adaptations to that.
1) higher probability of outbreaks in regions with high densities, closeness of humans and concentration of travels (manufacture worldwide economics. But China not the lone responsabile. Probabilities of outbreaks in others backyard
2) connect outbreak and compartment of diffusion. Batresercher? may be, without being racist. See also others as Hanta viruses
3) diffusions. China looks like to have done as well as possible to limit. Other countries as USA have been awful
4) mutations came soon and empowered diffusions and possibly pathogeny vaccine? Mutations then in Italy, India, USA?, South Africa (so Commonwealth ?

Always look at the 4 systems of reference, 2 by two, double them (eight), half for worms holes, half for highest densities, and alternate hyperbolic (worms holes) and ellipic identified principles densities. Along level of information. The determinist way of researching will than show plenty of flaws, if the complexity of statistical inference, is properly manager.

At least in this way of science, see that determinist science plenty of flaws; so citizens' phenomenologies must talk

0 0 Reply • Share ›

V **vgupta123**
21 days ago

Freedom of information act (FOIA) needs to be updated so that there are very clear guidelines regarding what can be redacted (such as names of certain individuals) and what cannot.

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P **p. gutierrez**
21 days ago

Why retract 'Proximal Origin of SARS-CoV-2'? The article shows that the authors covered up for Ralph Baric, because they reference his January 22, 2020 article, 'Receptor Recognition by Novel Coronavirus from Wuhan: An analysis based on decade long structural study of SARS', five times. That Baric article is the heart of 'Proximal Origins', the Covid-19 receptor binding motif (RBM) is not optimal, even though it binds human ACE2 molecules with high affinity. You would have to retract Baric's paper also.

Then you would also have to retract 'Proximal Origins' sister article in 2021, 'Origins ofSARS-CoV-2': A Critical Review', by the same authors. That article
has less believability in it, than 'Proximal Origins' itself, says the Covid-19 furin cleavage site, RRAR, is not optimal. Exact same authors.

Those who want to retract 'Proximal Origins' want to make the Covid-19 plandemic origins more and more political, and less and less scientific. Bad and nonsensical 'science' by Andersen, Holmes, Rambaut, Garry, etc, in 'Proximal Origins', to coverup for Ralph Baric (Mr. Coronavirus Chimera Inventor), is much better than having witless politicians bashing China, with some laboratory spillover nonsense.

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thejuneauraven ↗ p. gutierrez
14 days ago

Yeah. Where's your wet market animal that shows the species jump to humans? Just as we thought. Nice try though.

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P **Plebney** ↗ p. gutierrez
20 days ago

You're hoping to restrain witless politicians? Good luck with that.

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